

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

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By: **Senators Exum, Britt, Conway, Currie, Gladden, Hughes, Jones,
Lawlah, and McFadden**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2004

Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Reparations for the Enslavement of African Americans**

3 FOR the purpose of supporting the national request for congressional hearings and a
4 federal commission to study and consider reparations for African Americans;
5 and educating Americans about the history of slavery and its current
6 repercussions.

7 WHEREAS, The dehumanization and atrocities of slavery in the United States
8 were mandated by formal laws that were codified and enshrined within the United
9 States Constitution; and

10 WHEREAS, The United States government has never acknowledged,
11 apologized, or otherwise taken responsibility for its role in slavery or segregation, de
12 jure and de facto, and has never made reparations to African Americans for the
13 generations of labor expropriated from them, deprivation of their freedom and rights,
14 and terrorism against them resulting in widespread injury and death; and

15 WHEREAS, The 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism held in
16 Durban, South Africa, acknowledged that the transatlantic slave trade and slavery
17 were crimes against humanity; and

18 WHEREAS, H.R. 40, pending before the United States House of
19 Representatives, acknowledges the fundamental injustice and inhumanity of slavery;
20 establishes a commission to study slavery, its subsequent racial and economic
21 discrimination against freed slaves and the impact of those forces on living African
22 Americans today; and makes recommendations to Congress on appropriate remedies;
23 and

24 WHEREAS, H.R. 40 and the concept of reparations have been supported by
25 state and local resolutions across the country, including legislation passed in the
26 states of Louisiana and California and the city councils of Detroit, Michigan;
27 Cleveland, Ohio; Chicago, Illinois; Evanston, Illinois; Atlanta, Georgia; Washington,
28 D.C.; Baltimore, Maryland; Inglewood, California; Dallas, Texas; Philadelphia,
29 Pennsylvania; Paterson, New Jersey; and Burlington, Vermont; and

1 WHEREAS, Numerous national, state, and local organizations, as well as
2 religious institutions, legal organizations, and labor unions have officially endorsed
3 the concept of reparations and H.R. 40; and

4 WHEREAS, The United States government has acknowledged and taken
5 responsibility for its role in the unjust internment of Japanese Americans during the
6 second World War and has undertaken to pay reparations to the internees and their
7 descendants and to apologize for the unjust abrogation of their rights; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States has lent its support to other reparations claims
9 even where such claims did not take place on United States soil; now, therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That we hereby
11 express our support for H.R. 40 and call upon the State congressional delegation to
12 endorse the bill and advocate for its passage in Congress; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That we engage in supportive activities to publicize the concept of
14 reparations and the passage of H.R. 40; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
16 Legislative Services to the Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor of Maryland;
17 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
18 the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
20 Legislative Services to the Honorable John Conyers, Jr., United States
21 Representative of Michigan, author and primary sponsor of H.R. 40, 2426 Rayburn
22 Building, Washington, D.C. 20515; and the Maryland Congressional Delegation:
23 Senators Paul S. Sarbanes and Barbara A. Mikulski, Senate Office Building,
24 Washington, D.C. 20510; and Representatives Wayne T. Gilchrest, C. A. Dutch
25 Ruppertsberger III, Benjamin L. Cardin, Albert R. Wynn, Steny Hamilton Hoyer,
26 Roscoe G. Bartlett, Elijah E. Cummings, and Christopher Van Hollen, Jr., House
27 Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.